

APRIL 2019 EDITION

## ANZAC DAY



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### The Thai–Burma railway

The Thai–Burma railway (known also as the Burma–Thailand or Burma–Siam railway) was built in 1942–43. Its purpose was to supply the Japanese forces in Burma, bypassing the sea routes which had become vulnerable when Japanese naval strength was reduced in the Battles of the Coral Sea and Midway in May and June of 1942. Once the railway was completed the Japanese planned to attack the British in India particularly the road and airfields used by the Allies to supply China over the Himalayan Mountains.

Aiming to finish the railway as quickly as possible the Japanese decided to use the more than 60,000 Allied prisoners who had fallen into their hands in early 1942. These included troops of the British Empire, Dutch and colonial personnel from the Netherlands East Indies and a small number of US troops sunk on the USS Houston during the Battle of Java Sea. About 13,000 of the prisoners who worked on the railway were Australian.

When this workforce proved incapable of meeting the tight deadlines the Japanese had set for completing the railway, a further 200,000 Asian labourers or rōmusha (the precise number is not known) were enticed or coerced into working for the Japanese.

The 415 kilometre railway ran from Thanbyuzayat in Burma (now Myanmar) to Non Pladuk in Thailand. It was constructed by units working along its entire length rather than just from each

end. This meant that the already difficult problems of supply became impossible during the monsoonal season of mid 1943.

Starved of food and medicines, and forced to work impossibly long hours in remote unhealthy locations, over 12,000 POWs, including more than 2,700 Australians, died. The number of rōmusha dead is not known but it was probably up to 90,000.

### Remembering the railway

All memory is selective. Communities, like individuals, remember some stories of the past while forgetting others. For memories to survive at the collective or national level they need to be championed—not just once but over the decades.

Many Australians have performed that role for prisoners of the Japanese. In the decades after World War II, ex-prisoners published their memoirs and eye-witness accounts. Many of these proved to be immensely popular. Russell Braddon's *The Naked Island* (1951), for example, sold well over a million copies and stayed in print for decades.



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There were also memorable fictional accounts of captivity, some of which were adapted for commercial films and television series. The most famous of these was *The Bridge on the River Kwai* which, though bearing little resemblance to events in 1942-43, generated a popular interest in the railway which continues to this day.

In the 1980s Australian ex-POWs returned to Thailand and reclaimed Hellfire Pass from the jungle which had swallowed it when the Thai-Burma railway was demolished after World War II. The cutting soon became a site of memory for many Australians, particularly on Anzac Day. Its dramatic scale and its towering walls, scarred with drill incisions made by hand, spoke particularly vividly to the hardships endured by POWs along the railway.

The building of the Hellfire Pass Memorial Museum by the Australian government in 1998 also made it a key site of memory, attracting tourists and 'pilgrims' of many nationalities.

But 'Hellfire Pass' was more than just a cutting. In its vicinity a sequence of bridges and embankments were needed to keep the railway route along the escarpment level. There were also many camps housing the thousands of workers, including Australians. These have now disappeared into the exquisitely beautiful landscape.

### **The Anzac legend and Australian memory**

Over the years this story of atrocity and suffering has become an affirmation of Australian courage and resilience. Although prisoners of war suffered the humiliation of being defeated and captured, they came to be portrayed as men who had triumphed over adversity. Displaying in captivity the qualities of humour, resourcefulness and mateship, they were able to integrate their experiences into the dominant national memory of war since the Gallipoli campaign of 1915, the Anzac 'legend'.

The POW experience is also remembered for service of the medical personnel who, with little equipment or medicines, cared for desperately ill men in primitive hospitals. Most famous of these doctors is the POW surgeon Sir Edward 'Weary' Dunlop. His statue now stands outside the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, not so far from another iconic image of compassion, Simpson and his donkey. Although Dunlop was only one of 106 Australian POW medical officers, in recent years he has come to represent them all—and the values of courage and compassion that they and many Australians manifested in captivity.

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### **Hellfire Pass (Konyu Cutting) today**

Since 1945, prisoners of war and the Thai–Burma railway have come to occupy a central place in Australia's national memory of World War II.

There are good reasons for this. Over 22,000 Australians were captured by the Japanese when they conquered South East Asia in early 1942. More than a third of these men and women died in captivity.

This was about 20 per cent of all Australian deaths in World War II. The shock and scale of these losses affected families and communities across the nation of only 7 million people.

This website focuses on Hellfire Pass (Konyu Cutting), the deepest and most dramatic of the many cuttings along the Thai–Burma railway. Not all Australian POWs worked here in 1943.

Nor was the workforce in this region exclusively Australian. However, in recent years Hellfire Pass has come to represent the suffering of all Australian prisoners across the Asia–Pacific region. The experiences of prisoners elsewhere were, in fact, very diverse.

### **The Enemy**

Around 12,000 Japanese and 800 Korean soldiers worked on the Thai–Burma railway as engineers or guards. There were some of over five million soldiers who served with the Imperial Japanese Army in World War II.



### **The Workers**

Military units to which the Australians belonged were broken up into work forces to meet the Japanese need for labour. From late 1942 more than 13,000 Australians were sent from Singapore, Java and Timor to work on the Thai–Burma railway.

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## The Thai Burma Railway and the Hellfire Pass

The (Thai-Burma) railway... was the common and dominant experience of Australian POWs...[it] distorted or ended the lives of over half of the Australian prisoners of the Japanese...

[Hand Nelson, 'Measuring the railway' in Gavan McCormach and Hank Nelson (eds), *The Burma-Thailand Railway*, Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1993, 17, 19]

## Dementia

It may begin with forgetting where you left your car keys and can eventually lead to potentially dangerous situations such as forgetting to switch off the heater or kitchen stove.



Memory loss experienced from dementia is different from 'normal' forgetfulness (Source: Shutterstock).

This is a very real experience for more than 353,800 Australians living with dementia right now. With Australia's population rapidly ageing,

the prevalence of dementia is expected to increase to 400,000 in less than five years.

According to figures released by Alzheimer's Australia:

There are more than 1,800 new cases of dementia in Australia each week.

*That's about one person every six minutes...*

### What is dementia?

Dementia affects a person's mental ability and **causes them to 'forget' things** and experience problems, such as:

- Remembering birthdays, names and the day or year;
- Speaking or writing;
- Misplacing where you left your medication or other items; and
- Becoming angry or agitated.

### Types of dementia

There are more types of dementia than you may think. Some of the main types include:

**Alzheimer's disease** (most common type)  
Degeneration of the brain leading to problems with memory, thinking skills and performing daily tasks.

### Vascular dementia

Impaired supply of blood to the brain, causes a series of small strokes which, over time, contribute to a gradual mental decline.

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## Lewy body disease

Accumulation of abnormal microscopic protein deposits in the brain, leading to problems with attention and alertness, hallucinations and tremors.

## Frontotemporal dementia

Damage to the right and left frontal lobes (front of the brain), resulting in deterioration in behaviour, personality, language disturbances or alterations in muscle or motor functions.

## Huntington's disease

Brain cells slowly die causing problems with movement, coordination, communication, thinking and memory.

## Alcohol related dementia

Due to excessive alcohol consumption affecting memory, learning and other mental functions.

## Answers from people living with dementia

Hear about dementia straight from the people living with it in this great video series from Alzheimer's Australia:

- What should people know about dementia?
- The unexpected positives of dementia
- What annoys you most about living with dementia?

## Just forgetful or do I have dementia?

Everyone becomes forgetful from time to time. But when does an ordinary memory lapse indicate something more serious?

Memory loss experienced from dementia is different from 'normal' forgetfulness.

An example of 'normal' forgetfulness, according to [Alzheimer's Australia](#), is misplacing the car keys, while dementia memory loss is like forgetting what your car keys are used for.

## Early signs of dementia

One of the most **common early signs of dementia can be memory loss** but symptoms, whether obvious or subtle, vary for each person.

Other signs of dementia may include:

- Loss of ability to go shopping, gardening or perform personal grooming;
- Reduced concentration;
- Personality or behaviour changes; and
- Wanting to be alone and away from loved ones.

These are just a few of the possible 'early' indicators that something might not be 'right'.

Remember: Only your local doctor will be able to properly diagnose dementia.

Did you know according to Alzheimer's Australia: On average, symptoms of dementia are noticed by families *three years* before a proper diagnosis is made.

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### **Wanted: A cure or prevention**

There is currently no cure for dementia.

The onset of the neurological disease cannot yet be stopped or reversed.

For years, researchers across the world have been investigating ways to cure dementia.

While we wait for that historic moment being diagnosed with dementia early on can help you plan for the future.

### **I'm 'too young' to have dementia**

The term 'younger onset dementia' describes dementia diagnosed in people of any age under 65 years. The latest Alzheimer's Australia figures reveal younger onset dementia affects about 24,500 Australians.



(Source: Shutterstock).

While this statistic is worrying, many more people are diagnosed with dementia *after* the age of 65 years.

But regardless of how old you are, it's important to know...

... memory loss and dementia is *not* a normal part of ageing.

Find out more about younger onset dementia at Alzheimer's Australia.

### **So, who can help?**

Alzheimer's Australia can provide support services, education and information, as well as assisting carers and families to manage the daily challenges that dementia brings.

Find the support you need through initiatives such as The National Dementia Helpline (☎ Freecall: 1800 100 500).

### **Living at home with dementia**

More and more people continue to live at home with dementia.

Sometimes it can be challenging, but it's important not to treat people living with dementia in their home as 'incapable' of living life.

### **They say there's no place like home.**

So helping a person remain in the familiar surroundings of their home for as long as possible, whether living with dementia or not, is important.

If you or a loved one lives at home with dementia, there are people whose job involves reminding you to:

- Eat or take prescribed medication;
- Bathe daily;

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- Switch off appliances such as the kitchen stove or heater; and
- Feed or care for pets.

Living at home while receiving assistance is made possible with Home Care Services/Packages. Learn more about Home Care Packages (by going on the Aged Care Insite website @ [agedcareinsite.com.au](http://agedcareinsite.com.au)) or by visiting Narrogin Regional Homecare website at [Narrogin.wa.gov.au](http://Narrogin.wa.gov.au).

### Living in aged care homes with dementia

Many aged care homes offer full support to people living with dementia.

Some of these homes have separate dementia wings, or sections and may be described as *Dementia-specific*.

Most of these homes have activities to help keep people with dementia productively engaged.

**Aged Care Insite Guide:**  
[www.agedcareguide.com.au](http://www.agedcareguide.com.au)





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## From the Manager's Desk

We have produced a Narrogin Regional Homecare calendar for all our Clients. It is particularly useful for Clients who attend any of our Social Support groups as it has our Rivergum and Tuart luncheons listed. If you would like a calendar please request one from the office.

### About Australian Hearing

Australian Hearing provides world leading research and hearing services for the wellbeing of all Australians. It is the nations largest provider of Government-funded hearing services to eligible people including children under 26, pensioners, veterans, adults with complex communication needs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over 50. With more than 70 years experience and with over 600 locations around the nation, Australian Hearing is here to help all Australians manage their hearing health, ensuring they stay connected with their family, friends and the world around them. To book an appointment call 9792 1200. Australian Hearing are seeing Clients at Jessie House monthly. They will be at Jessie House next on Tuesday, May 14, 2019.

## Anzac Day Services

### Thursday 25 April, 2019

The Narrogin Sub-Branch of the RSL invites you to remember the service men and women who sacrificed their lives.

#### Dawn Service

The Dawn Service will be held at the Memorial Park, Narrogin.

Assembly from **5:30am** for the Service commencing at **5:50am**.

**Gunfire breakfast** will be served in the Reception Centre, Federal Street, following the Dawn Service. Proudly provided by the **Shire of Narrogin**.

#### Morning Service

All who wish to march are asked to assemble at the RSL Hall, Egerton Street by **9:30am**

The march to the Memorial Park will set off at **9:50am**

Members of the public are invited to attend the Memorial Park for the Commemoration Service, Immediately following the march.

The service will commence at **10.00am**.

Light refreshment will be served in the RSL Hall following the morning service.



# NARROGIN REGIONAL HOMECARE Newsletter

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When I am grateful, I am  
neither rushing nor slouching  
through my day – I'm dancing.

Br. David Steindl-Rast

## LEST WE FORGET

See that you hold fast the heritage that we leave you,  
Yeah and teach your children its value,  
That never in the coming centuries their hearts may fail them,  
Nor their hands grow weak.

Have a wonderful April and a peaceful Easter

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lynne".

Lynne Yorke  
and the Narrogin Regional Homecare Team

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## Dates for your Diary

### Kalgoorlie “The Heart of the Goldfields”

**Tuesday, 28 May to Saturday, 1 June, 2019**

The trip to Kalgoorlie is fully booked. We can put your name on a waiting list – just in case there is a cancellation if you wish to do so. Please don't forget, full payment of \$650.00 is due no later than Thursday 1 May, 2019.

### Mandurah Community Museum

**Saturday, 22 June, 2019**

The Mandurah Community Museum is a very humble looking building and you could be forgiven for thinking it most likely doesn't contain much and you would be 100% wrong!

The museum building began its life in 1898 as a schoolroom. There will be a guided tour which includes a detailed history of Mandurah, an interactive classroom from a bygone era where you can sit down and write with a real ink pen. Prison cells, mega mouth shark, historic photos, indigenous heritage and ship wreck stories all feature at the museum. All in all a pleasant way to spend an hour or two learning the history of the Peel Region. The Museum is located next to the new Mandurah Bridge. Treat yourself to a relaxing lunch beside the ocean at the many restaurants and eateries on the Mandurah foreshore. What a lovely way to say goodbye to Autumn and welcome in Winter.

**Pickups: commence 8.am. Leisure Centre approximately 8.30am**

**Cost: \$25.00 includes morning tea at Dwellingup and donation towards the museum. Lunch in Mandurah at your own cost.**

### Quindanning High Tea

**Monday 29 July 2019**

This event is hosted by The Country Women's Association of Boddington and Quindanning and is a fundraising event for Ovarian Cancer.

More details to follow in the May newsletter.



Image by Pixabay

# Complaints, Compliments and Feedback

Narrogin Regional Homecare encourages Clients to provide feedback on the support we provide. This assists us to better meet your needs and to plan for the future.

If you want to comment on any of the services you receive, please let us know. If you do not feel comfortable with the Support Worker who visits you, please let the Manager know and a change of staff can be arranged if necessary.

All complaints and feedback are treated confidentially and will not affect the quality of support you receive or any other dealings you have with Narrogin Regional Homecare.

Support Workers carry "Continuous Improvement /Tell Us What You Think" forms with them at all times. You may request a form at any time from a Support Worker or from the office.

If you wish to pay a compliment, this also helps us to continue to deliver quality service. We encourage you to acknowledge quality service with a simple "thank you" or let us know in some small way that we've got it right.

## Complaints Procedure

- 1 You are encouraged to raise your complaint with the staff member concerned if you feel comfortable to do so.
2. If you are not happy to discuss the issue with the staff member or are not satisfied with the outcome you can contact the Manager.

If your complaint concerns the Manager, you can contact the Executive Manager Corporate and Community Services at the Shire of Narrogin on telephone 9890 0900. Remember that you can use an advocate to assist you. The phone number for the Manager, Narrogin Regional Homecare is 9890 0700.

3. The Manager will liaise with the Client Services Officer and the staff to work to resolve the complaint.
- 4 If the issue is not satisfactorily resolved you can submit your complaint in writing to:

*Manager Community Care Services  
Narrogin Regional Homecare  
Shire of Narrogin  
Post Office Box 1145  
NARROGIN WA 6312*

We are happy to assist you with this if you phone the office.

- 5 If you are unhappy with the Manager's decision you may wish to contact someone outside the area of Narrogin such as one of the advocacy and external complaints contacts listed over the page.
- 6 Once your complaint has been finalised someone from Narrogin Regional Homecare will be in touch to make sure you still feel comfortable to access support and to ask for your feedback on the complaint process.

## NARROGIN REGIONAL HOMECARE

Jessie House, Clayton Road, Narrogin  
(between the Leisure Centre and the Hockey Field)  
PH: 9890 0700  
Email: [mccs@narrogin.wa.gov.au](mailto:mccs@narrogin.wa.gov.au)  
[www.narrogin.wa.gov.au](http://www.narrogin.wa.gov.au)





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*Love the life*

